

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MANILA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
1501 Roxas Boulevard
1302 Pasay City, Philippines**

FY13 HANDBOOK



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been in operation in the Philippines since the U.S. Veterans Bureau was opened in 1922 (except during the Japanese occupation of WW II), and it is an integral part of the United States' Mission to the Republic of the Philippines.

The VA Regional Office (RO) and Outpatient Clinic (OPC) are co-located on Embassy grounds at 1501 Roxas Boulevard, 1302 Pasay City, Philippines. Strict requirements for entry are implemented. An appointment and proper identification are necessary to enter the facility. RO and OPC is open Monday through Friday, 7:30AM to 4:30PM. The facility is closed weekends and US and Philippine Holidays.

This is the only VA healthcare facility located in a foreign country. VHA Directive 2012-019 and 38CFR17.35, provides the authority for delivery of certain outpatient health care services to U.S. Veterans residing or visiting in the Philippines.

The OPC eligibility requirements are different than VA Medical Centers and CBOCs in the United States. ***Before a U.S. Military Veteran can be treated at this clinic, they must have a VA service-connected disability rating of at least zero percent and must have an appointment before he/she can be seen.***

Service connected U.S. Veterans who receive services through the OPC may be treated for their non-service connected disabilities within the available scope of services and resources of the OPC. U.S. Veterans that live in another foreign country should coordinate their medical care and medication refills with the Foreign Medical Program.

Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraq Freedom and/or Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) combat Veterans may receive free health care for five years after discharge for illnesses related to military service, in the absence of an awarded service connected disability. This includes any recent combat veteran with service against a hostile force in a war after the Gulf War or during a period of hostility after November 11, 1998. For additional information refer to the eligibility section of this handbook.

Inpatient and non-VA care (fee basis) outpatient care is limited to treatment of service-connected conditions and is provided through non-VA (fee-based) arrangements with designated private health care providers in the community. All costs associated with treatment from a non-VA (fee based) provider or medical facility for non-service connected treatment is the responsibility of the veteran.

Health care services are provided at the OPC by Primary Care Physicians (PCPs) and contracted Specialist Consultants that are available either in the Clinic or by non-VA (fee based) contract for service connected conditions.

VAOPC services are made up of general medicine and internal medicine. Referrals to different subspecialties are provided as determined necessary by the Primary Care Provider or Compensation and Pension (C&P) Examiner.

Subspecialty referrals for treatment of service connected conditions will be provided through non-VA (fee based) providers if the service is not available in the Clinic. Referrals to specialists as required for examinations for Compensation and Pension will be provided within the Clinic as a priority.

Limited ancillary services are available in the Clinic:

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|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| ▪ Laboratory | ▪ Pharmacy | ▪ Radiology |
| ▪ Nursing | ▪ Prosthetics | ▪ Social Work |

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The Manila Outpatient Clinic, being in a foreign country, provides care based on legislation. That legislation defines eligibility for care that is different than facilities located in the United States. To be eligible for medical care in the Philippines, a Veteran must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a. **A certified U.S. Military veteran with a VA service-connected disability rating of at least zero percent.** Service Connected US Veterans who receive services through the Manila VA Outpatient Clinic can also be treated for their non-service connected disabilities within the available scope of services provided within the clinic.

If treatment or services are not available at the clinic for the service connected disability, the Veteran's primary care provider may refer the Veteran to a non VA care provider. Prior to seeking treatment from a non-VA (fee based) specialist, a letter of authorization (LOA) must be issued by the clinic to the treating provider/facility. Failure to obtain a letter of authorization prior to treatment will result in the Veteran being responsible for all charges. The Veteran is responsible for paying charges related to non-service connected treatment sought outside the clinic.

Or

- b. **Old Philippine Scouts who served prior to July 1941 with VA service-connected disabilities.**

Or

- c. **An Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraq Freedom and/or Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) Veteran.** An OEF/OIF/OND Veteran may receive free health care for five years after discharge for illnesses related to military service, in the absence of an awarded service connected disability. This includes any recent combat veteran with service against a hostile force in a war after the Gulf War or during a period of hostility after November 11, 1998. It is the responsibility of the Veteran's healthcare provider(s) to determine if treatment provided is related to the Veteran's combat experience or military service. After the five-year period is finished or as soon as service connection has been established, the Veteran will receive treatment in accordance with the station's eligibility regulations (refer to 1.a of this section). An OEF/OIF/OND Veteran may be entitled to limited dental care as determined by the Clinic. Details can be provided by the assigned Patient Relations Assistant (PRA). Currently enrolled Veterans and new enrollees who are discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003 are eligible for the enhanced benefits for five years post discharge. Veterans, including activated Reservists and members of the National Guard, are eligible if they served on active duty in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, and have been discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.

Or

- d. **A veteran participating in a Vocational Rehabilitation Program** is provided medical care to allow them to continue with the program.

A veteran who served in a branch of service with the Philippine Government (New Philippine Scouts, Organized Guerilla Forces, and Commonwealth Army) may request care from the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) in Quezon City. VMMC's telephone number is: 02-927-6426 or 02-927-1250 or 02-927-7393. The VA Outpatient Clinic in Pasay City is not associated nor does it refer or pay for care for US Veterans who seek care at Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City.

GETTING STARTED WITH VA HEALTH CARE

1. If you meet the criteria as detailed in the Eligibility Information section, call the Eligibility Clerk at the Manila Outpatient Clinic **02-318-8309**. The clerk will collect information from you and make an eligibility determination. If it is determined that you are eligible for medical care, you will be registered and scheduled an appointment with a VA physician.
2. You will receive an appointment letter confirming the date and time of your appointment along with other information you need to know.
3. Your appointment letter may instruct you to report for a laboratory or testing procedure that requires you not to drink or eat for 12 hours prior to your appointment. This is called a "fasting procedure". If you are asked to report for a fasting procedure, you may check in anytime from 7:30AM to 12:00NN.
4. To get the most out of every visit to your primary care team, ask questions. Before each appointment, make a list of the things you are concerned about. Write them down and bring the list with you.

5. When you arrive on the day of your appointment, you will be greeted by security officers who will ask you to provide identification and a copy of your appointment letter to verify your clinic appointment. If you do not have an appointment, you cannot enter the clinic. The clinic does not accept walk-in patients.

Upon verification of an appointment, Veterans and their attendants are issued a badge to wear. The badge must be visible at all times.

Veterans will not be allowed to bring in cell phones or any electronic device.

6. After Veterans and their approved attendants pass through security, they proceed to the clinic to check in with the Receptionist located in the clinic lobby. The receptionist will provide you with additional instructions.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- **My Health e-Vet (MHV) Program:** MHV is the electronic gateway to your health benefits and services. Using a secure website, you can access health information, view Federal VA benefits and resources, send secure messages to your healthcare provider, and refill VA prescriptions online. To use MHV or to learn more about it, log on to: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov> or call **02-318-8381**.
- **Veterans Who Live In A Foreign Country Other Than The Philippines:** US Veterans that do not live in the Philippines should coordinate their medical care and medication refills with the Foreign Medical Program. hac.fmp@med.va.gov.
- **Foreign Medical Program (FMP):** FMP is a VA program for US Veterans with VA rated service-connected disabilities that are residing or traveling outside the United States. Under the FMP, the VA Health Administration Center (HAC) assumes payment responsibilities for certain necessary health care services associated with the treatment of service-connected disabilities. If you do not live in the Philippines and you are living or planning to travel outside the US, you need to register with the Foreign Medical Service, P.O. Box 469061, Denver, CO 80246-9061. For more information about the program, please call (303) 331-7590 or email: hac.fmp@med.va.gov.
- **Compensation and Pension Examinations:** The Outpatient Clinic is responsible for examinations required in connection with processing of claims for VA or Social Security benefits. When a veteran files a claim for benefits, the VA Regional Office may request the Clinic to schedule a comprehensive general medicine and/or specialist examination with the Veteran. Results of the examinations are used by the VA to determine if the veteran is qualified to receive disability compensation or pension.
- **Patient Advocate:** A Patient Advocate is available to provide a direct channel of communication and mediation between the OPC staff and patients, their families and members of the community. If you have complaints or compliments please contact the Patient Advocate at 02-318-8316 or by email at: <https://iris.va.gov>.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Who is in charge of my medical care in the Philippines?**

If you are eligible for care, your primary care team in the Philippines is composed of a Primary Care Physician (PCP), Nurse, Pharmacist and Patient Relations Assistant (PRA). The Primary Care Physician manages your health care needs including disease prevention and health education.

The focus of your care is to treat conditions that will help you reach an optimum state of health. The Primary Care Physician and/or Nurse will discuss abnormal test results with you immediately. You will receive a letter regarding your test results within 14 days. You can also access your test results through your MyHealtheVet Account.

2. **Visiting the Philippines?**

If you are visiting the Philippines and require non-urgent medical care, call the clinic for eligibility determination. If it is determined that you are eligible for care in the Philippines, an appointment will be scheduled with a VA physician. For emergent medical care, proceed to the nearest hospital. If you forgot to bring your prescriptions with you and need a supply of your medications to suffice until you return to the US, the Outpatient Manila Clinic can provide you up to a 15 day supply if you are eligible and the medications were previously prescribed by a VA provider.

3. **What is a Non-VA Care (Fee Basis) Program?**

If treatment or services are not available at the clinic for your service connected disability, the Veteran's primary care provider could refer the Veteran to a non-VA (fee based) specialist. Prior to seeking treatment from a specialist, a letter of authorization (LOA) must be issued by the clinic to the treating provider/facility. Failure to obtain a letter of authorization prior to treatment will result in the Veteran being responsible for all charges. The Veteran is also responsible for paying charges related to non-service connected treatment sought outside the clinic.

4. **How do I schedule and/or cancel appointments?**

Call your primary care team during regular business hours to:

- Make an appointment
- Change an appointment, or
- Cancel an appointment

If you know you are going to miss an appointment, please cancel it as soon as possible so that another veteran can get an appointment.

5. **What is Audio Care?**

Audio Care automatically calls the Veteran to remind them of upcoming appointments. In addition, Audio Care is used to call Veterans about clinic closures during bad weather or unscheduled holidays and allow veterans to refill medications through an automated system. Be sure to verify and update your contact information when you visit the clinic. Failure to provide current address and telephone information will prevent you from receiving appointment letters and/or follow-up telephone reminder calls for your appointments.

6. **What happens if I just walk-in without a scheduled appointment?**

Patients are not permitted to enter the clinic without a scheduled appointment. Prior to coming to the clinic, call for an appointment.

If a medical emergency occurs, Veterans should go to a medical facility closest to them. Please refer to Emergency Care Section for instructions.

7. **What do I need to bring to my appointment?**

- a. Together with your appointment letter, bring two (2) of the following forms of identification:

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|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| ▪ Veteran Identification Card (VIC) | ▪ Voter's ID |
| ▪ Military ID | ▪ Driver's License |
| ▪ Social Security ID | ▪ Senior Citizen ID |
| ▪ Passport or Visa | ▪ Birth Certificate |
| ▪ Bureau of Post ID | |

If you don't have a Veteran Identification Card you may request one during your initial visit.

- b. If you are new, please bring a list of all current prescriptions as well as non prescription medications you are taking.
- c. If you have an attendant, the attendant should also bring two forms of identification that includes a picture. Only one attendant is allowed inside the Clinic. Please do not bring an attendant if it is not authorized or necessary.
- d. If your cell phone has a camera, you must leave it with the Guard at the gate. All electronic devices will not be allowed in the facility.
- e. You are discouraged from bringing children to your appointment. Only children 10 years and older are permitted access to the clinic.

8. **How can I contact the Outpatient Clinic (OPC)?**

- a. The OPC telephone number within Metro Manila can be reached by calling 02-318-8387. An automated attendant will answer your call and direct you to a call menu. If you know your party's extension, you can immediately bypass the menu by dialing the four digit extension. Otherwise, listen to the menu and select the appropriate option.
- b. Outside Metro Manila callers and within the Philippines using PLDT or SMART landlines, can call the toll free number: 1-800-1888-8782.
- c. Outside the Philippines, dial: International Access Code (011) (632) 318-8387.

9. **Am I eligible for the Veterans Travel Benefits Program?**

a. **ONLY service connected conditions of 30% percent or more are reimbursed travel.**

- i. Service connected scheduled appointments qualify for round-trip mileage reimbursement.
- ii. Non service connected OEF/OIF/OND veterans do not qualify for travel reimbursement

b. The VA reimburses eligible Veterans for expenses incurred traveling to and from their home to the VA Outpatient Clinic or other authorized facility subject to the limitation and regulations established by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

c. The Travel Benefits Program provides travel reimbursements to Veterans when they come to VA facilities for medical care. The VA's travel benefit program depends on Veteran's honesty to submit valid travel claims. Defrauding the VA or diverting VA's limited financial resources will not be tolerated. False and fraudulent claims will be turned over to the VA Office of the Inspector General to investigate and prosecute when necessary. The following documents must be presented before a claim is paid:

- i. Original receipts must accompany a travel claim.
- ii. Travel claims must be submitted within 30 days of travel.
- iii. Travel claims received after 30 days will be denied.

d. Questions about travel may be directed to the Manila Outpatient Travel Clerk at: 02-318-8388 or 02-318-8341.

10. **What laboratory tests can I avail of?**

Limited Lab tests performed in-house by OPC can be provided for any condition of the Veteran.

Tests referred to designated private laboratories maybe authorized for service connected disabilities only.

11. **If I need Emergency Care, what do I do?**

a. If you experience a medical emergency, please go to the medical facility nearest you. An emergency is defined as treatment for a condition of such a nature that a prudent layperson would have reasonably expected that delay in seeking immediate medical attention would have been hazardous to life or health.

b. A medical report from the treating facility must be faxed to the VA Patient Relations Assistant (PRA) within 72 hours. Failure to provide a medical report within in 72 hours of service will result in denial of hospitalization. The fax number is 02-310-5957.

c. A copy of the medical report will be routed to the patient's primary care physician to determine if the medical emergency is related to an awarded service-connected disability. If approved, a Letter of Authorization will be issued within 48 hours. Otherwise the cost of medical care is at the Veteran's expense.

- d. A claim for reimbursements for the cost of medical care incurred for unauthorized emergent medical services may be submitted to OPC within 2 years from the date the service was acquired. The claim will be subjected to VA regulations and guidelines on medical care reimbursement.
- e. Charges incurred for medical conditions that are not service connected will be the responsibility of the veteran to pay.
- f. If admission is authorized by the VA, patients are admitted to a semi private room. Patients who choose to upgrade their room are responsible for paying the difference in room, board and other additional charges upon discharge.
- g. Treatment for non-service connected medical care is at the expense of the veteran and must be paid prior to discharge.

12. How Do I Get Prescriptions Filled?

- a. Medications prescribed by VA Physicians are based on the VA Formulary. These are filled by the VA Pharmacy on the day of your visit. Please wait for your medications before leaving the clinic. For medications that will be mailed, your Pharmacist will send it within 10 to 14 work days upon receipt of your request with reference to your due date of refill.

Please be advised that some medications are only available for service connected conditions.

- b. The VA Clinic uses generic names for medicines so don't be alarmed if your medicines have different brand names. If you have questions, call 02-556-8387.
- c. Your VA Provider may order 30, 60, or 90 day supply of medications. Controlled drugs are limited to a 30 day supply.
- d. Refills must be requested at least 21 days before the refill due date. To refill a medication, you can either order:
 - i. By phone: call the VA Pharmacy AudioCare refill at telephone number 02-556-8387 or 1-800-1888-8387 (for PLDT users only).
 - ii. By Internet: Logon to the <https://www.myhealth.va.gov>
 - iii. By Mail or Fax: Complete and sign the Veteran Request for Refill of Medications and or Medical Supplies form (VA Form 10-2478) and mail to the Outpatient Clinic, 1501 Roxas Boulevard, 1302 Pasay City, Philippines or fax at 02-556-8387 or 1800 1888-8387 (for PLDT users only).
- e. Refills are delivered to your home by a commercial courier. A text message will be sent to notify you of the tracking number. Medications can be endorsed directly to the Veteran unless an authorized representative is approved to receive the medications.

- f. If your medication is not available in the VA Pharmacy, you will be instructed and authorized to buy it from your local drug store. Prior to purchase, the pharmacist will discuss reimbursement procedures for VA formulary or other approved medications.

PATIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Respect and Nondiscrimination

- You will be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect as an individual. Your privacy will be protected. You will receive care in a safe environment. We will seek to honor your personal and religious values.
- Treatment will respect your personal freedom. However, the use of medication and/or physical containment to control behavior or characteristics that pose a threat either to the Veteran's safety, the safety of other patients, or compromise the delivery or quality of health care may be implemented.
- You may decide whether to participate in treatment activities. You may decide whether or not to perform tasks in or for the outpatient clinic.
- You have the right to communicate freely and privately.
- To provide a safe treatment environment for all patients and staff, you are expected to respect other patients and staff and to follow the facility's rules. Avoid unsafe acts that place others at risk for accidents or injuries. Please report any condition you believe to be unsafe.

2. Information Disclosure and Confidentiality

- Your privacy will be protected. You will be given information about the health benefits you can receive. The information will be provided in a way you can understand.
- You will receive information about the costs of your care, if any, before you are treated. You are responsible for paying your portion of any non-service connected costs associated with your care.
- Your medical record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your consent unless authorized by law.
- You have the right to information in your medical record and may request a copy of your medical record or access it thru your MyHealtheVet account. You will be informed of all outcomes of care, including any potential injuries.

3. Participation in Treatment Decisions

- You, and any persons you choose, will be involved in all decisions about your care. You will be given information you can understand about the benefits and risks of treatment. You will

be given other options. You can agree to or refuse treatment. You will be told what is likely to happen to you if you refuse treatment. Refusing treatment will not affect your rights to future care but you take responsibility for the possible results to your health.

- Tell your provider about your current condition, medicines (including over-the-counter and herbals), and medical history. Also, share any other information that affects your health. You should ask questions when you do not understand something about your care. Being involved is very important for you to get the best possible results.
- You will be given, in writing, the name and title of the provider in charge of your care. As our partner in healthcare, you have the right to be involved in choosing your provider. You also have the right to know the names and titles of those who provide you care. Providers will properly introduce themselves when they take part in your care.
- You will be educated about your role and responsibilities as a patient. This includes your participation in decision making and care at the end of life.
- If you believe you cannot follow the treatment plan, you have a responsibility to notify your provider or treatment team.
- You have the right to have your pain assessed and to receive treatment to manage your pain. You and your treatment team will develop a pain management plan together. You are expected to help the treatment team by telling them if you have pain and if the treatment is working.
- You will be included in resolving any ethical issues about your care. You may consult with the Primary Care Physician and/or other staff knowledgeable about healthcare ethics.
- If you or the Clinic believes that you have been neglected, abused or exploited, you will receive help.

WHERE IS THE CLINIC LOCATED?



1501 Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City, 1302 Philippines

The clinic is located near the corner of Libertad street extension and Roxas Boulevard, beside Cuneta Astrodome. It is approximately three kilometers south of the U.S Embassy compound.

The clinic is open *Monday through Friday*, 7:30AM to 4:30PM., closed on weekends and U.S. and Philippine holidays

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

VA REGIONAL OFFICE

Main Number – Local	02-550-3888
Toll Free Outside Metro Manila	1-800-1888-5252
Fax:	02-550-3945

VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Main Number—Local	02-318-8387
Schedule Appointment – Local	02-318-8309
Toll Free Outside Metro Manila (PLDT)	1-800-1888-8782
Fax:	02-310-5957
Refill Prescription— Local	02-556-8387

SOCIAL SECURITY

Main Number	02-301-2000, extension 9
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VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS

Disabled American Veterans	045-892-6374
Veterans of Foreign Wars	045-892-2407
Retired Activities Office	02-524-2164
American Legion	045-625-5584

LOST OR REPLACE MILITARY ID CARDS & TRICARE MEMBERSHIP

Main Number	02-301-2493
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US EMBASSY

Main Number	02-301-2000
American Citizens Services	02-301-2091

IMPORTANT WEBSITES AND RESOURCES**MY HEALTHVET:**

<https://www.myhealth.va.gov>

VA BENEFITS AND HEALTH CARE INFORMATION:

<http://www.va.gov>

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT VA, SEND MESSAGE TO:

<https://iris.va.gov>

FOREIGN MEDICAL PROGRAM:

<http://www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/fmp/fmp.asp>

CHAMPVA INSURANCE:

<http://www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/forbeneficiaries.asp>

TRICARE:

<http://www.tricare.mil>